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The situation in the Middle East

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Fifty-eighth year

Letter dated 4 February 2003 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I submit to you below a list of Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace which occurred from 26 January to 2 February 2003.

As can be seen from the annexed list, sporadic Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace occurred during that period but have suddenly increased over the past few days, so that during the period from 26 January to 2 February 2003 alone, 28 such violations occurred. The reports issued by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) indicate that many of those violations involved deep penetration into Lebanese territory by Israeli warplanes flying at low altitudes over populated areas of Lebanon and breaking the sound barrier. Lebanon wishes to emphasize that such flights by Israeli aircraft over Lebanese populated areas instil terror among Lebanese civilians, especially children, and therefore constitute a form of international terrorism.

Israeli aircraft, moreover, have continued to fly in the manner referred to by you in your previous reports, especially the last two (S/2002/746 of 12 July 2002 and S/2003/38 of 14 January 2003), namely by flying over the sea and then entering Lebanese airspace north of the area of operation of UNIFIL in order to avoid being observed and identified by UNIFIL.

Lebanon considers it important to point out that, given that the Israeli violations of the Blue Line and Lebanese airspace constitute unlawful acts of aggression and provocation, Lebanon will exercise its natural and lawful right of self-defence, opposing them with ground anti-aircraft fire. Moreover, it is neither logical nor just to equate the Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace with Lebanese opposition to them by means of ground anti-aircraft fire, because, were it not for the Israeli air violations, the Lebanese ground anti-aircraft batteries would not be firing. Consequently, the responsibility rests with Israel, which must put an end to its

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violations of Lebanese airspace and stop such violations from creating greater tension and destabilizing the region.

These violations are part of a long, continuous succession of daily violations of the Blue Line carried out by Israel against Lebanese sovereignty by land, sea and air, in flagrant contravention of the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 425 (1978), as reported to you in our previous communications dated 22 May 2000 (S/2000/465), 24 June 2000 (S/2000/624), 27 June 2000 (S/2000/626), 11 August 2000 (S/2000/794), 2 November 2000 (S/2000/1066), 6 November 2000 (S/2000/1071), 10 November 2000 (S/2000/1087), 17 November 2000 (S/2000/1102), 26 November 2000 (S/2000/1118), 8 December 2000 (S/2000/1172), 20 December 2000 (S/2000/1223), 29 December 2000 (S/2000/1258), 31 December 2000 (S/2001/1), 15 January 2001 (S/2001/43), 17 January 2001 (S/2001/56), 17 January 2001 (S/2001/62), 5 February 2001 (S/2001/110), 11 February 2001 (S/2001/164), 1 March 2001 (S/2001/184), 19 March 2001 (S/2001/243), 2 April 2001 (S/2001/313), 10 April 2001 (S/2001/344), 12 April 2001 (S/2001/355), 17 April 2001 (S/2001/371), 30 April 2001 (S/2001/430), 8 May 2001 (S/2001/454), 14 May 2001 (S/2001/476), 14 May 2001 (S/2001/478), 17 May 2001 (S/2001/502), 29 May 2001 (S/2001/531), 18 June 2001 (S/2001/606), 25 June 2001 (S/2001/630), 27 June 2001 (S/2001/643), 24 September 2001 (S/2001/901), 23 October 2001 (S/2001/1004), 28 November 2001 (S/2001/1119), 11 December 2001 (S/2001/1117), 18 December 2001 (S/2001/1206), 31 December 2001 (S/2001/1337), 21 January 2002 (S/2002/96), 24 January 2002 (S/2002/114), 13 February 2002 (S/2002/167), 4 March 2002 (S/2002/247), 12 April 2002 (S/2002/414), 24 April 2002 (S/2002/480), 13 May 2002 (S/2002/538), 15 May 2002 (S/2002/543), 21 May 2002 (S/2002/564), 10 June 2002 (S/2002/651), 20 June 2002 (S/2002/687), 11 July 2002 (S/2002/752), 14 August 2002 (S/2002/935), 8 October 2002 (S/2002/1123), 8 November 2002 (S/2002/1235).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session, under agenda items 36 and 160, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Houssam **Diab**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Annex

Information summary

Subject: Israeli air violations

Between 1130 and 1222 hours on 26 January 2003 four Israeli warplanes overflew the sea off Shikka at a distance of 12 miles from the coast and reached the Bsharre, Uyun al-Siman, Dahr al-Baydar, and Damur areas. They circled over the areas of Shikka, Batrun, Byblos and Jounieh, thus violating Lebanese airspace.

Between 1212 and 1218 hours on the same day four Israeli warplanes flew north over the sea off the city of Tyre, at a distance of 10 miles from the coast, thus violating Lebanese airspace.

Between 1935 and 2320 hours on 30 January 2003 three Israeli reconnaissance aircraft carried out overflights, as follows: the first, heading east over the city of Tyre at a distance of 9 miles from the coast and circling between Riyaq and Zahle; the second, over the city of Tyre and northward at a distance of 10 miles from the coast; and the third, heading eastward over the sea west of the city of Sidon at a distance of 8 miles from the coast. The two last-mentioned aircraft together circled over the South and the area east of Sidon and reached Damur. They thus violated Lebanese airspace.

Between 0425 and 0630 hours on 31 January 2003 two Israeli reconnaissance aircraft flew eastward over the sea west of the city of Sidon at an altitude of 28,000 feet and circled over the area east of Sidon, thus violating Lebanese airspace.

Between 1100 and 1124 hours on the same day six Israeli warplanes flew north over the sea off the city of Tyre at a distance of 4 miles from the coast, after which four of them headed towards the Bekaa region and two, towards Shikka. They all circled between Shikka and Ghazir, thus violating Lebanese airspace.

At 2215 hours on 1 February 2003 an Israeli reconnaissance aircraft overflew the sea west of the city of Sidon at an extremely high altitude at a distance of 5 miles from the coast and circled between Sidon and Damur, then returned in the direction of the occupied territories at 0043 hours on 2 February 2003, thus violating Lebanese airspace.

At 1135 hours on 2 February 2003 eight Israeli warplanes overflew areas of the South and reached the regions of Kasrawan and the Bekaa, thus violating Lebanese airspace. Ground anti-aircraft batteries belonging to the Lebanese Army in the South and Bekaa regions targeted them, whereupon they returned in the direction of the occupied territories at 1200 hours.